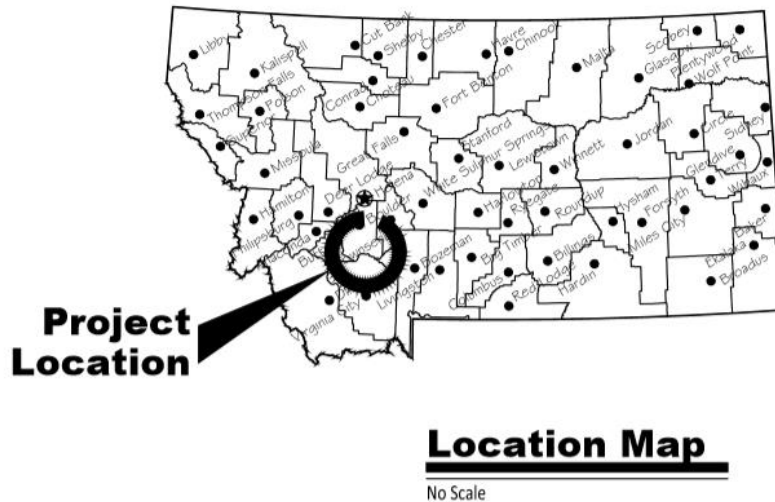


**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS DRAFT  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)**

**PROPOSED GROUP BICYCLE CAMPSITE, SHADE SHELTER AND CONCESSION REMODEL AT  
LEWIS & CLARK CAVERNS STATE PARK**

July 2019



**I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- A. Montana State Parks (MSP) maintains 55 state parks that provide a variety of recreational opportunities. According to *Charting a New Tomorrow: Montana State Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, 2015-2020*, visitation to Montana State Parks is increasing and visitors are seeking a variety of amenities. This includes an increasing demand for campsites at Montana State Parks that can accommodate bicyclists on long distance bicycle tours. Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park, located in Southwestern Montana, is seeing a steady increase in the number of bicyclists traveling through the area and the need to provide bicycle campsite amenities.

There are several national bicycle tour routes that travel through Montana, including the Great Divide Mountain Bicycle Route that starts in Canada and ends in New Mexico, and the Northern Tier Cross Continent Route that starts in Washington and ends in Maine. Bicyclists generally ride during the day and arrive late to campgrounds when all the campsites may be taken. They typically cannot reserve a campsite ahead of time because there can be unanticipated schedule changes due to weather, equipment malfunction and injuries. When campgrounds are full, MSP staff work to find a spot for bicyclists to camp, but management would like to have a set-aside camping area specifically designed for these visitors.

- B. Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park expanded cave tour options to allow visitors physically

unable to complete the two miles and 600 stairs of the Classic tour to still see a portion of the cave. Implemented in 2017, Paradise Tours served 1,304 visitors. In 2018, the park increased the number of times the tours were being offered from two to four times per day and served 3,339 visitors. These Paradise Tours have proven most popular with not only the physically challenged but also for families with very small children.

Currently, we are sending our most vulnerable visitors to wait at a weather-exposed area with benches that retain heat. A shade shelter is needed to provide these vulnerable populations while they wait for the tours to start.

- C. The 2019 concessions upgrade address broadening the food selections offered at Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park. Since the 1996 concessions building remodel, the past concessionaire, CC Recreational Services, opted to omit the grill, hood, and grease trap challenges associated with updating an old, historic building. Instead they have offered deli-style sandwiches, and microwavable or cold treats. SharBert Enterprises, Inc. took up the contract in 2005 and continued with the limited food selections with very few modifications.

The proposed renovation to the Concession Building herein will begin to address the increased use and demands of park visitors. In the 2016 Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park Business Plan, created by Pros Consulting, suggested widening the variety of food options and having food choices more unique to Montana. In the current state, the concessionaire can only serve a limited number of options in cold food.

In addition, during the peak months of summer, there is often a waiting period for those who have bought tour tickets. During this waiting time, the concessionaire sees an increase in the café and gift shop business. The current size of the building does not adequately accommodate this increase in numbers.

This draft Environmental Assessment (EA) addresses three areas within the park; each having minimal disturbance and was therefore deemed appropriate to combine the assessment of environmental impacts into one report. The following is a description of the existing condition at the park:

Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park features one of the largest known limestone caverns in the Northwest. Access to the cave is by guided tours only, May 1 to September 30. Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park also features camping and trails to hike or bicycle, a state-of-the-art visitor center, interpretive displays, a gift shop, food and beverage concessions, amphitheater and interpretive events presented during the summer months.

The park has a large campground with 40 campsites, a tipi, and three cabins, which are reservable online, and a group camping area. The site encompasses 3,015 acres. The entry area is at an elevation of 4,300 feet and the caverns area is at an elevation of 5,300 feet. Park and cave visitations have increased steadily to 136,413 in 2018.

## **II. FOUNDING**

The proposed improvements would be funded by:

- American Academy of Dermatology (\$8,000)
- AARP (\$10,000)
- MT Tourism Destination Development (\$42,500)
- Jefferson Valley Community Fund (\$2,500)
- Montana Gift Corral (\$5,000)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (\$60,000)

### **III. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION**

- A. Group Bicycle Campsite. In order to address increasing demand to accommodate touring bicyclists and support tourism, MSP proposes to construct a new group bicycle campsite. The campsite would be located adjacent to previously developed areas within the park.

Because this will be a shared group site that does not require space for vehicle or camper parking, camping fees would be lower than standard campsite fees. Shared group bicycle campsite would be available on a first-come, first-served basis. While these sites would be designed specifically for bicyclists, the sites may also appeal to other non-motorized users, such as hikers or campers arriving by human- powered watercraft, such as kayaks.

The Park has enough space for a group bicycle campsite with an area of 2,500 to 5,000 square feet. The site will include four 12'x14' raised tent pads, two bicycle racks, one freezeproof yard hydrant, one prefabricated metal fire ring with grill and one 10'x12' shelter on a 16'x20' concrete pad with picnic table and 110V-20A weatherproof outlet with bicycle clamp. (Figures 1 and 2) This group site is modeled after the sites installed at Placid Lake and Salmon Lake State Parks in 2018.

Electricity at the group site would be provided for a variety of purposes, such as charging devices or security lighting. The water hydrant will be located where the water supply is located reasonably close to the proposed shared group bicycle campsite and substantial construction, such as pavement removal, would not be required. Nearby trails may be improved or constructed to connect the shared group bicycle campsite to existing facilities at the park.

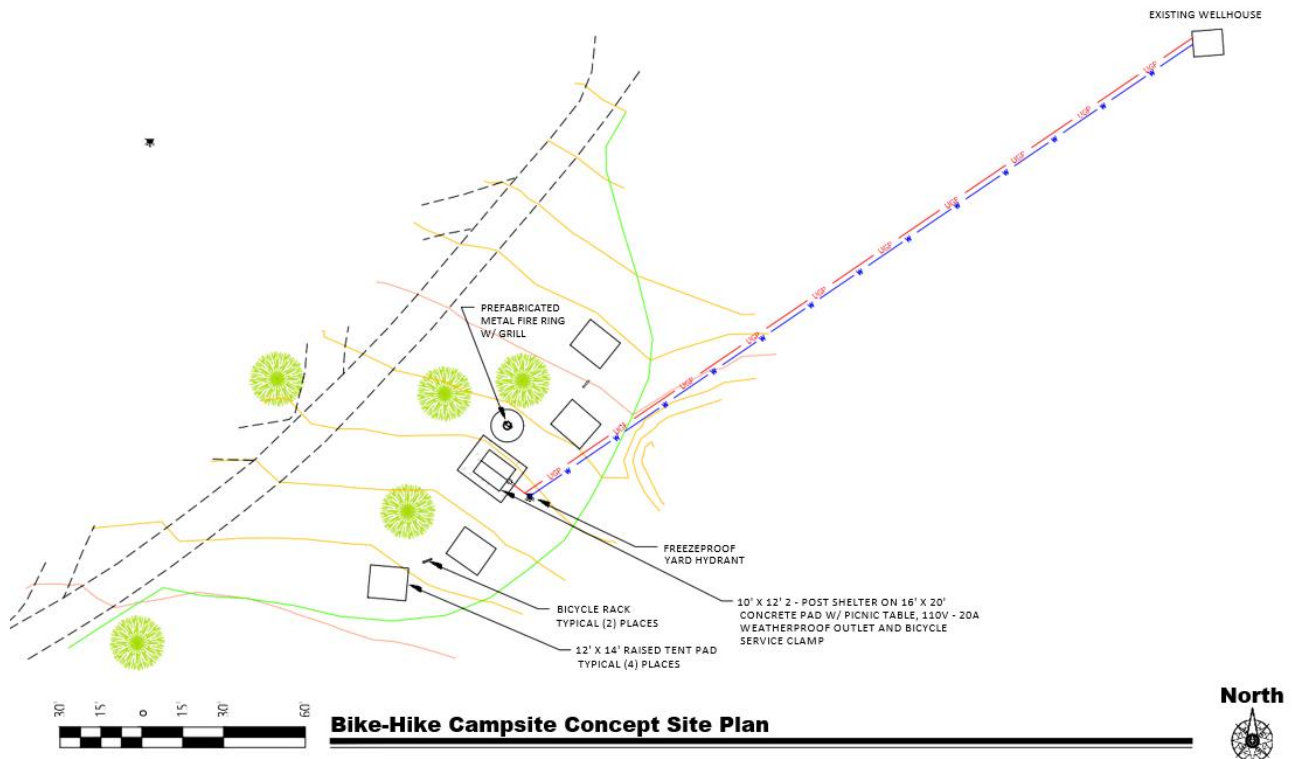


Figure 1: Typical Site Plan

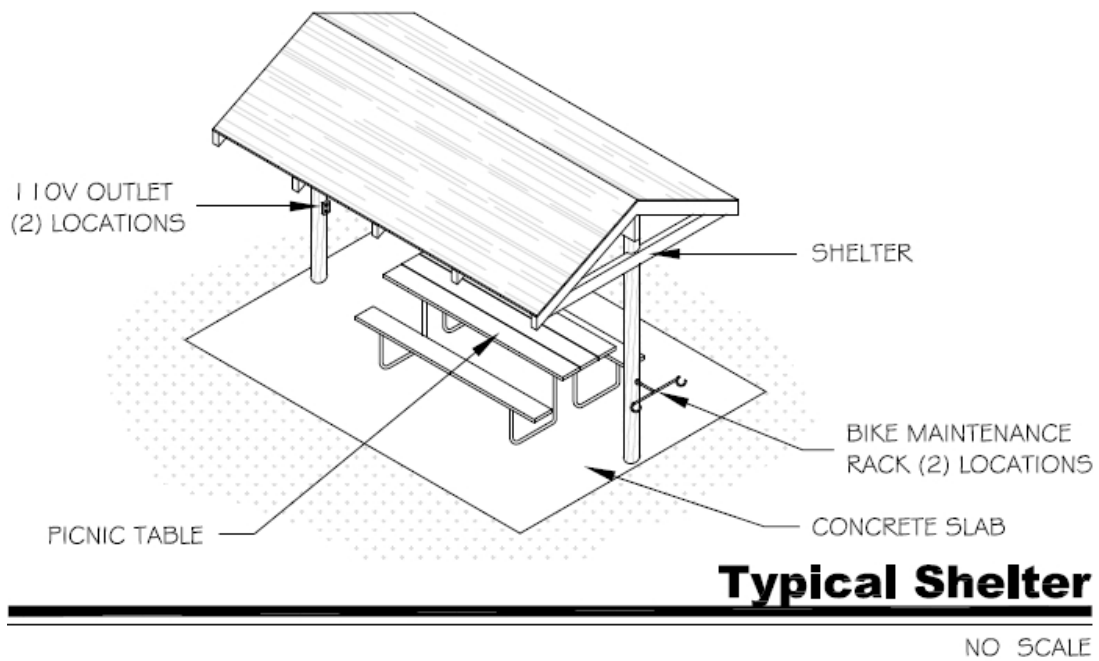
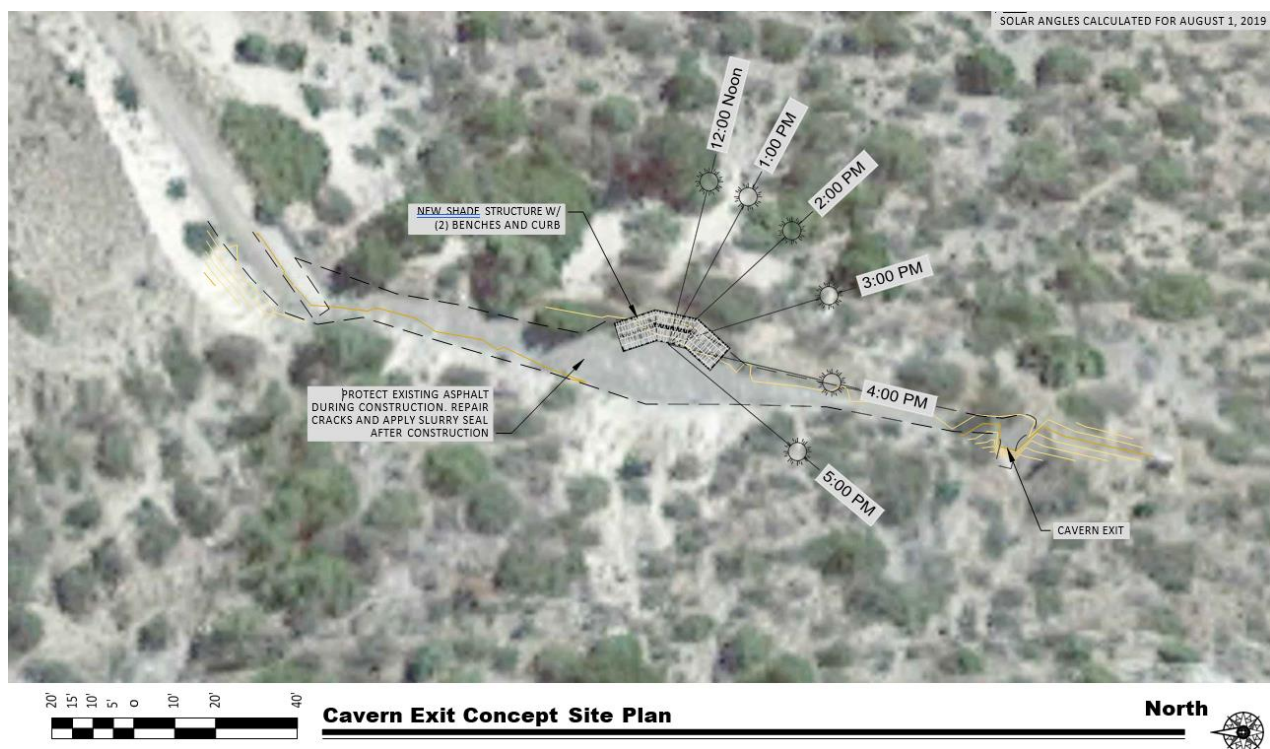


Figure 2: Typical Shelter

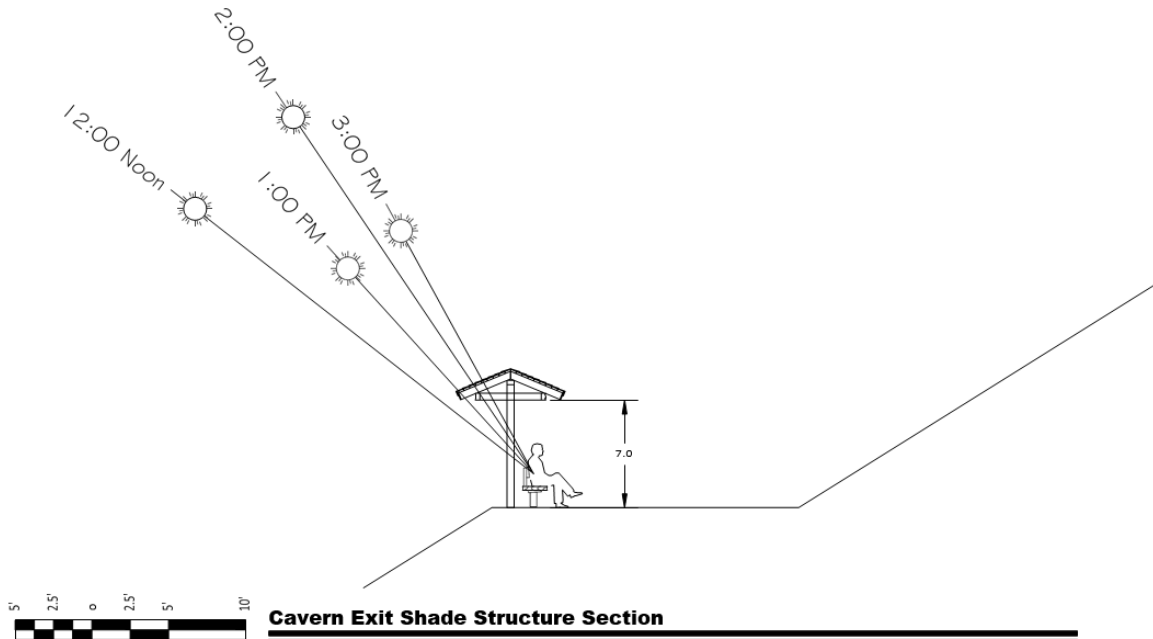
- B. Shade Shelter. Since the inception of the Paradise Tours in 2017, the park has seen a steady increase in the number of visitors partaking in this more accessible tour. The park has received positive feedback at developing a tour where those who may be physically challenged are still able to experience the amazing sites in the caverns. The park has also found, that by allowing very young children the opportunity for this shorter tour, there can be less damage to the cave resources and the nesting bats.

To protect those waiting for their tour to begin, the proposed shelter will be designed to consider late morning to late afternoon sun while not blocking the view from the site. Architectural design will complement the existing cave visitor center patio and not be too obtrusive on the viewshed from the cave visitor center. There will be adequate room to negotiate a t-turn in the access cart. The existing asphalt should be protected, perhaps with bedding sand, during construction. After construction, the entire asphalt area should be patched, and slurry sealed to provide continuity. (Figures 3 and 4)



**Figure 3: Typical Shade Shelter Site Plan**

NOTE:  
SOLAR ANGLES CALCULATED FOR AUGUST 1, 2019



**Figure 4: Typical Shade Shelter**

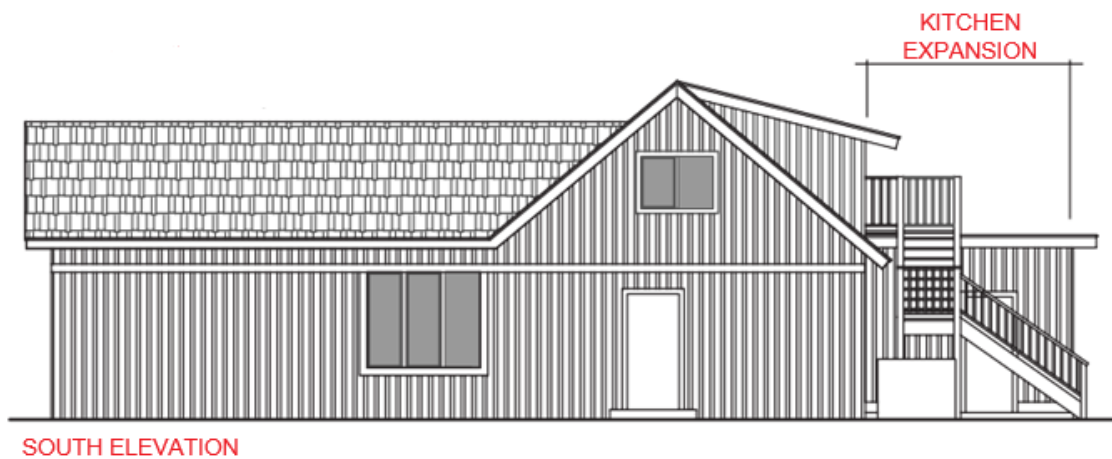
- C. Renovation of the Concession Building. The concessions building is located adjacent to the upper cave visitor center parking lot. (Figure 5) Prior to the park contracting with a concessionaire, park cave tour visitation was 44,612 tours in 2004 and 43,705 tours in 2005. Comparing this to current cave tour visitation with concessions available, of 59,537 tours in 2017 and 63,035 tours in 2018, shows an average increase of 43 percent. These numbers indicate having concessions available resulted in increased park revenue and provided some amenities that are asked for and enjoyed by park visitors.

In order to begin to address the increase in visitors and their increased demand for an additional variety of concessions, proposed work to be done include the following: relocate the HVAC system, build exterior kitchen shell (120 sq. ft. expansion), rebuild stairs to the second floor, new roof on kitchen shell, new siding on kitchen shell and undertake electrical and code upgrades as required. (Figure 6)

Lewis & Clark Caverns is within a National Register Historic District (24JF2033). Based on review of proposed plan and a site visit, the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has concurred that this renovation will not impact the integrity or feel of the building and are not visible from the main (front) building elevation. (Appendix A)



**Figure 5: Concession Building Site Location**



**Figure 6: Kitchen Expansion south elevation**



- RELOCATE HVAC
- BUILD EXTERIOR KITCHEN SHELL (120 SF EXPANSION)
- REBUILD STAIRS TO SECOND FLOOR STORAGE
- NEW ROOF INSTALLED ON KITCHEN SHELL
- NEW SIDING INSTALLED ON KITCHEN SHELL
- ELECTRICAL AND CODE UPGRADES AS REQUIRED
- UPGRADE KITCHEN EQUIPMENT
- UPGRADE/RECONFIGURE CASEWORK



### No Action Alternative

B. The alternative to the proposed action is a no action alternative. If MSP does not construct the shade shelter at the entrance to the cave where the Paradise tour begins, the physically challenged and/or families with young children will continue to have to wait in the sun and high temperatures for their tours to begin. The park will continue to receive negative feedback from those who must wait in the harsh sun. The incidents of heat stroke and other heat and sun related issues will continue to rise.



- C. The alternative to the proposed action is a no action alternative. If MSP does not expand the concession building as proposed, the concessionaire will continue to sell a limited food inventory and be unable to fully accommodate the increased visitation to the park and to the concession building. More visitors may opt out of purchasing from the concessionaire, limiting the amount of revenue that goes to the park per the concessionaire agreement.

## V. AUTHORITY AND DIRECTION

MSP has the authority to develop outdoor recreational resources in the state per Section 23- 2-101, Montana Code Annotated (MCA). The public involvement for this EA follows Section 23-1-110 MCA and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 12.2.433.

## VI. EVALUATION OF IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The proposed actions at the Park would create minimal impact or disturbance to the proposed locations, respectively.

The addition of a **group bicycle campsite** would result in a footprint of disturbance or affected area of approximately 2,500 to 5,000 square feet. There could be additional areas disturbed from connecting water and electricity lines and improving or constructing connective trails. The proposed improvement would occur within an area of the park where previous construction activities associated with an established campground have already created a footprint of disturbance.

The installation of a **shader shelter** at the Paradise Tour cave entrance will be installed over a current hard-surface trail that classic cave tour visitors use to return to the cave visitor center and parking lot. The shade structure will cover several current benches that visitors use as they wait for the tour to begin and will not impede the viewshed.

The renovation of the **concession building** would add an additional 120 sq. ft. footprint to the rear of the building and does not affect the nature of the historical district designation (Appendix A). Rebuilding the stairs and upgrading electric and code requirements as needed will cause minimal disturbance to the physical environment as there is already electricity to the site.

### 1. Land Resources

#### *Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The proposed **group bicycle campsite** would involve grading for tent spaces and concrete slab for the shelter; trenching for electrical lines to the outlets in the shelter; and trenching to connect water lines to water hydrants, where feasible. These activities would cause minimal disturbance to soils. Replacing soil and planting native vegetation in disturbed areas after construction would stabilize the soil and mitigate these minimal, adverse impacts.
- B. The proposed **shade shelter** would involve sinking four support posts on an area of the trail that is already covered with cement. No additional impervious surface will be added.

- C. The proposed renovation of the **concession building** would involve an additional 120 sq. ft. of impervious surface. This land disturbance will be located at the back of the building where the ground is already hard-packed and unable to grow vegetation. The relocation of the HVAC system will add a very limited amount of land disturbance.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to the existing soil conditions or geology to any of the three proposals here.

## 2. Air

*Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. Air quality would be minimally impacted temporarily during construction of the **group bicycle campsite** and would return to normal levels after construction.
- B. Air quality would be minimally impacted temporarily during construction of the **shade shelter** and would return to normal levels after construction.
- C. Air quality would be minimally impacted temporarily during renovation of the **concession building** and would return to normal levels after construction.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to existing air quality.

## 3. Water

*Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The location of the proposed **group bicycle campsite** is not near any streams or rivers. The additional bicyclists camping at the park would require potable water, but this would not be substantial enough to affect groundwater supplies.
- B. The location of the proposed **shade shelter** is not near any streams or rivers.
- C. The location of the proposed renovation of the **concessions building** is not near any streams or rivers.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to the existing water quality or supply.

## 4. Vegetation

*Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The proposed **group bicycle campsite** would require clearing some vegetation. The area of disturbance would be minor and located near previously disturbed areas. No wetlands or riparian vegetation would be disturbed. To mitigate these minimal, adverse impacts, MSP would plant native vegetation in disturbed areas and continue to manage the park for reduction of noxious weeds.
- B. The proposed **shade shelter** will not require any vegetation disturbance.
- C. The renovation of the **concession building** will require minimal vegetation disturbance (the site of the expansion is a hard-packed soil area where vegetation, where not even weeds, will grow).

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to the existing vegetation.

5. Fish/Wildlife

*Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The proposed **group bicycle campsite** would not impact fish because the improvements would not be near their habitat. The park is used seasonally by small populations of wildlife. Wildlife in the area is tolerant to some level of human presence within this well-established park.
- B. The proposed **shade shelter** would not impact fish because the improvements would not be near their habitat. The park is used seasonally by small populations of wildlife. Wildlife in the area is tolerant to some level of human presence within this well-established park.
- C. The proposed **concession building** renovation/kitchen expansion/kitchen expansion would not impact fish because the improvements would not be near their habitat. The park is used seasonally by small populations of wildlife. Wildlife in the area is tolerant to some level of human presence within this well-established park.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to existing fish and wildlife.

VII. **EVALUATION OF IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

1. Noise/Electrical Effects

*Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. There would be temporary noise related to construction of the **group bicycle campsite** infrastructure. To mitigate these minimal, adverse impacts, construction would occur during the off-season when the park is not experiencing high volumes of visitors.
- B. There would be temporary noise related to construction of the **shade shelter**. To mitigate these minimal, adverse impacts, construction would occur during the off-season when the park is not experiencing high volumes of visitors.
- C. There would be temporary noise related to the renovation of the **concession building**. To mitigate these minimal, adverse impacts, construction would occur during the off-season when the park is not experiencing high volumes of visitors.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to existing noise or electrical effects.

2. Land Use

*Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The proposed **group bicycle campsite** would not impact land use. The state parks would remain open and available for recreation.
- B. The proposed **shade shelter** would not impact land use. The state parks would remain open and available for recreation.
- C. The proposed renovation of the **concession building** would not impact land use. The state parks would remain open and available for recreation.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to the existing land use.

### 3. Risk/Health Hazards

#### *Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The proposed **group bicycle campsite** would provide touring bicyclists a safe place to spend the night. Even if the group bicycle campsite was already taken, MSP is proposing a “no turn away” policy to ensure touring bicyclists can get off the highway and find a safe place to campsite before dark. This project would positively impact and improve safety for bicyclists.
- B. The proposed **shade shelter** would provide visitors with the ability to wait under shade and under cover in during rainstorms. This project would positively impact and improve safety, limiting exposure to the sun’s harmful rays.
- C. The proposed renovation of the **concession building** will bring the electrical and codes up to date, thereby reducing risk and improving public safety.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to risk or health hazards.

### 4. Community Impact

#### *Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The proposed **group bicycle campsite** project is minor in scope and would not impact the community.
- B. The proposed **shade shelter** project is minor in scope and would not impact the community.
- C. The proposed renovation of the **concession building** is minor in scope and would not impact the community.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to the community.

### 5. Public Services/Taxes/Utilities

#### *Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. There would be no substantial alteration in the need for public services or utilities because of the proposed **group bicycle campsite**. There would be no change in taxes. No additional maintenance costs are associated with the proposed action as the affected areas would be small and require minimal maintenance.
- B. There would be no substantial alteration in the need for public services or utilities because of the proposed **shade shelter**. There would be no change in taxes. No additional maintenance costs are associated with the proposed action as the affected areas would be small and require minimal maintenance.
- C. There would be no substantial alteration in the need for public services or utilities because of the proposed renovation of the **concession building**. There would be no change in taxes. No additional maintenance costs are associated with the proposed action as the affected areas would be small and require minimal maintenance.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to existing public services, taxes, or utilities.

## 6. Aesthetics/Recreation

### *Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. Since the area of the proposed **group bicycle campsite** is small, there would be no changes to aesthetics. It would improve recreation opportunities by providing touring bicyclists with a safe, affordable campsite. This project could enhance local and statewide tourism efforts to affirm Montana a destination for bicycle touring. There would be positive impacts on recreation access and opportunity resulting from this project. Existing recreational use at the Park would be positively affected by the addition of the shared group bicycle campsite.

The state park fee for a bicycle campsite is currently \$10 for Montana residents, \$18 for non-residents (\$10 with an annual pass), and \$5 for residents that are seniors or disabled. Revenue generated from the bicycle campsite would be used to support ongoing operations and maintenance of state parks.

- B. The proposed **shade shelter** will be oriented to provide the maximum amount of shade without adversely affecting the view or contrast sharply with the current aesthetics. It will improve visitor amenities and the overall visitor experience.
- C. The renovation of the **concession building** will not adversely affect the aesthetics of the park. The expansion of the building area is to the rear of the building and does not experience foot or auto traffic. The kitchen expansion will improve the Park's visitor amenities by providing the public with more food and beverage choices during their stay.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to aesthetics or recreation at the designated state parks. There would be a missed opportunity to enhance local and statewide efforts to make Montana a destination for bicycle touring, provide a shaded area for our physically challenged visitors, and to offer a more varied menu to park visitors.

## 7. Cultural/Historical Resources

### *Impacts of the Proposed Action:*

- A. The proposed **group bicycle campsite** is not expected to affect cultural or historic resources because the project is small in scope, requires minimal groundbreaking activities, and is in an area that is already developed. The Montana State Parks' Heritage Resource Program Manager would provide consultation and assessment services to ensure that cultural and historical resources are not affected.
- B. The proposed **shade shelter** is not expected to affect cultural or historic resources because the project is small in scope, requires minimal groundbreaking activities, and is in an area that is already developed. The Montana State Parks' Heritage Resource Program Manager would provide consultation and assessment services to ensure that cultural and historical resources are not affected.
- C. The proposed renovation of the **concession building** is not expected to affect cultural or historic resources because the project is small in scope, requires minimal groundbreaking activities and is in an area that is already developed. Montana SHPO has reviewed the proposed plan and concurs that the project will not affect the

preservation status of this designated historical district. The Montana State Parks' Heritage Resource Program Manager would provide consultation and assessment services to ensure that cultural and historical resources are not affected.

*Impacts of the No Action Alternative:* There would be no changes to cultural or historical resources.

#### **VIII. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED FOR EIS**

Because of the three proposed projects being small and located in previously disturbed areas within state parks, the impacts to the physical and human environments would be minimal. Montana State Parks would mitigate these minimal, adverse impacts by replacing soil and planting native vegetation on any disturbed areas. Construction would take place during the off- season to avoid negative impacts to park visitors. These projects would positively impact local and statewide recreation and tourism. Based on this analysis, an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

#### **IX. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The public notice and participation outlined below is appropriate for a project of this scope having limited impacts, which can be mitigated. The public will be notified about this EA and the opportunity to comment through the following actions:

- Two public notices will be published in the *Helena Independent Record*, *Bozeman Chronicle*, *Butte Montana Standard* and the *Whitehall Ledger*;
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Montana State Parks web page: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/>; and
- Notification to the National Speleological Society, Northern Rocky Mountain Grotto and the National Cave Association.

The public comment period will extend for (30) thirty days and comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., Friday, September 13th, 2019. The public can submit written comments to:

Proposed Bicycle Campsite, Shade Shelter and Concession Renovation  
1400 S. 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or comments can be emailed to [Betsey.LaBroad@mt.gov](mailto:Betsey.LaBroad@mt.gov).

#### **X. PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THIS EA**

Betsey LaBroad  
Region 3 Parks Manager  
Montana FWP  
1400 S 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Bozeman, MT 59718  
[Betsey.LaBroad@mt.gov](mailto:Betsey.LaBroad@mt.gov)

#### **XI. DOCUMENTS REFERENCED**

Montana State Parks. 2014. Charting a New Tomorrow: Montana State Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, 2015-2020. Montana State Parks, Helena, Montana.

## **XII. APPENDICES**

- A. SHPO Letter of Concurrence
- B. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
- C. Tourism Report – Montana Department of Commerce



## Appendix A



CONCUR  
MONTANA SHPO  
DATE 5/29/19 SIGNED *Pete Brown*

Travelers' Rest State Park  
PO Box 995  
Lolo, MT 59847  
May 7, 2019

Peter Brown  
Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
PO Box 201202  
Helena, MT 59620-1202

RE: Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park/National Register Historic District/Concession Building (24JF2033)

Dear Pete:

We have had some correspondence and a recent site visit about updating and remodeling the concessions building which is included in the Lewis and Clark Caverns National Register Historic District (24JF2033). We appreciate your great feedback during our site visit on April 17, 2019.

Based on our visit, our current plans related to funding levels, are only to remodel the back of the concessions building to provide more kitchen area space inside the building. These additions would not impact the integrity or feel of the building and are not visible from the main (front) building elevation. As a result, the upcoming changes to the back of the building do not seem to be a great concern and will not adversely affect the building's integrity.

With regard to further remodeling of the building in the future as funding becomes available, we discussed several options that would be preferable from a historic preservation standpoint including: 1) Leaving the front original windows in place and moving the restaurant/gift shop entrance door to the right (as you face the building) of the original windows rather than putting a new door in the center of where there are currently only windows; and 2) Expand the gift shop area out to the front of the building but replace the windows with similar looking ones to the original divided light windows or even more preferably, expand the gift shop off to the side of the building (where current gift shop is located) using a shed type roof addition which would help limit significant modifications to the front of the building. These types of changes seem more in line with keeping the historic integrity of the building as intact as possible.

We would also plan to hire an architect to help with further remodeling that has a solid background in historic preservation. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments with our approach. Please send any comments to the address listed above for me at Travelers' Rest State Park. Thank you, Pete!

Sincerely,

*Sara Scott*

Sara Scott, Ph.D.  
Montana State Parks/Heritage Resources Program

CC: Paul Valle/D&C, Rhea Armstrong/Park Manager

## Appendix B

### 23-1-110 MCA PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

**Date:** July 16, 2019

**Person Reviewing:** Betsey LaBroad

**Project Location:** Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park

**Description of Proposed Work:** Montana State Parks proposes to add a shared use bicycle campsite to Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park, a shade shelter at the entrance to the Paradise Tour and renovate the concession building by adding a 120 sq. ft. kitchen addition shell. These three projects will address an increasing demand to provide amenities for touring bicyclists, elderly and very young visitors and provide varied food and beverage choices. The bicycle campsite will include four 12'x14' raised tent pads, two bicycle racks, one freezeproof yard hydrant, one prefabricated metal fire ring with grill and one 10'x12' shelter on a 16'x20' concrete pad with picnic table and 110V-20A weatherproof outlet with bicycle clamp. The shade shelter will consist of 4 support posts set into the ground at the cave entrance with the shelter rood set to maximize shade throughout the day. The concession building renovation/kitchen expansion will be to the rear of the building and the conceptual plan has been approved by Montana SHPO.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- ☒ A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?  
Comments: There may be trail improvements or additions to connect the shared group bicycle campsite to existing facilities at each state park. There will be no roadway or trail built for the shade shelter or concession expansion.
- ☒ B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?  
Comments: The kitchen expansion will add an additional 120 sq. ft.
- ☐ C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?  
Comments: Minimal excavations may be required to install hydrants and electrical outlets, for the support posts for the shade shelter, and minimal excavation for the kitchen expansion, but would not exceed 20 c.y.
- ☐ D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?  
Comments: This proposal would not involve parking lots.
- ☐ E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?  
Comments: This proposal would not affect the shoreline.

- ☐ F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?  
Comments: Proposed improvements would not be located near lakes, reservoirs, or streams.
- ☒ G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?  
Comments: The proposed bicycle camp, shade shelter and kitchen addition are all within a National Register Historic District (24JF2033). Based on review of proposed plan and a site visit, (SHPO) has concurred that this renovation will not impact the integrity or feel of the site. The Montana State Parks' Heritage Resource Program Lead would ensure that these projects do not affect any cultural or historical resources.
- ☐ H. Any new above ground utility lines?  
Comments: No
- ☒ I. Any increase or decrease in campsite of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?  
Comments: No; Lewis & Clark Caverns currently has a large campground with 40 campsites, a tipi, and three cabins and a group camping area. The proposed addition of a bicycle campsite with four tent pads would not increase the total number of campsites by 25%.
- ☐ J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?  
Comments: This proposal would not result in any significant changes to the state park or use.

If any of the above are checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented in the EA.

## Appendix C

### TOURISM REPORT

#### MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Jan Stoddard, Bureau Chief, Industry Services and Outreach Bureau  
Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development- Commerce  
301 S. Park Ave.  
Helena, MT 59601

**Project Name:** Proposed Shared Group Bicycle Campsite, Shade Shelter Installation and Concession and Gift Shop Remodel at Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park

**Project Description:** There are three components to this project. Montana State Parks (MSP) is proposing the following:

- a) Construct a new shared group bicycle campsite at Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park. The bicycle camp will be located adjacent to previously developed areas within the park.
- b) Add a shade shelter for those visitors opting to take the Paradise Tour implemented in 2017 for visitors physically unable to complete the two miles and 600 stairs of the classic tours. This abbreviated tour is also popular among families with small children. These visitors are currently sent to wait at a weather exposed area with benches that retain heat. The design of the shelter will consider late morning to late afternoon sun while not blocking the view from the site and will protect these vulnerable populations while they wait for the tours to begin. Architectural design will complement the existing cave visitor center patio and not be too obstructive on the viewshed from the visitor center.
- c) Expand the concessions building to address the increase in visitors, proposed work to be done include the following: relocate the HVAC system, build exterior kitchen shell (120 sq. ft. expansion), rebuild stairs to the second floor, new roof installed on kitchen shell, new siding on kitchen shell and electrical and code upgrades as required.

Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?

NO

**YES**

If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, these three projects have the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy if properly maintained. Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park receives over 80,000 resident and non-resident visitors each year. These projects would help to enhance the visitor experience and possibly increase visitation to this attraction, therefore increasing the economic impact to Lewis & Clark Caverns State Park.

Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?

NO

**YES**

If YES, briefly describe:

These improvements are critical to the safety, usability, and long-term sustainability for outdoor recreation, including non-resident visitors. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature    Jan Stoddard

Date:    7/30/19